

VZCZCXRO7956  
PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHGO #0810 2910805  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 170805Z OCT 08  
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8292  
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000810

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/16/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: SHAN YOUTH GROUP ENCOURAGES LITERACY IN TAUNGGYI

Classified By: Pol Officer Chelsia Wheeler for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

Summary

1. (C) Over the past two years, the Kan Baw Za (KBZ) Youth Library and Reading Club has conducted two projects funded through the Embassy small grants program: a mobile libraries project on Inle Lake and a library and learning center in Taunggyi, Shan State. Both projects promote literacy and teach critical thinking and computer skills to prepare young Burmese for future leadership roles in their communities. End Summary.

Mobile Libraries on Inle Lake

2. (C) With its first Embassy small grant, KBZ Youth Library created eight mobile libraries on Inle Lake, six of which had active membership and regular business hours at the time of our recent monitoring visit. Every two months, KBZ Youth Library members rotate the collections among the libraries, giving each one 200 new volumes. These libraries receive supplemental help from various organizations, including the British Embassy and the Pa'O National Organization (PNO), an ethnic organization that promotes the interests of the Pa'O ethnic group.

3. (SBU) Ko Tun Aung, the project manager, told us the greatest hurdle for the libraries is finding and retaining qualified librarians who are willing to work several hours a week on a volunteer basis. Since most materials are in English, librarians must also have basic English skills. Due to a lack of qualified personnel, two of the libraries are closed at present. Ko Tun Aung said he plans to reopen them as soon as he finds a qualified librarian from the local community.

Learning Center in Taunggyi

4. (C) With a separate small grant, KBZ is creating a youth learning center in Taunggyi, Shan State. With large English and Burmese collections (approximately 2,000 volumes in each language), and a membership of approximately 2,000 people from Taunggyi and surrounding villages, the center is now the area's largest public library. Every Saturday morning, KBZ members and community volunteers take turns hosting discussions on issues relevant to youth. Recent topics have included science and education.

5. (C) When finished, the Embassy-funded computer classroom addition will boast eight computers with high-speed internet connections. When Poloff visited on August 21, she observed library patrons using several computers that had already been installed. KBZ members plan to hold basic computer and internet classes in the room for a small fee. These fees,

combined with internet usage fees, will fund upkeep on the computers and help pay for rent for the building. The computers, and particularly the internet connectivity, will provide a valuable resource for locals for whom phone and internet access are unaffordable (purchase costs can exceed USD 7,000 for both).

VAJDA